(b) if so, the steps proposed to be taken to upgrade our Hospitals to International standards;

(c) whether the Budget proposals for 2003-2004 contain any specific incentive in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether Government propose to introduce community based universal health insurance scheme for the poor so that all sections of the society get quality health care?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. However, there is no specific scheme to upgrade the hospitals to international standards as upgradation of hospitals is an ongoing process.

(c) and (d) The incentives include, *inter alia* concessions in income tax to such financial institutions as provide long term capital to private hospitals with 100 beds or more; increase in rate of depreciation in respect of life saving medical equipment, facilitate upgradation and replacement; reduction in customs and excise duty on life saving equipment and a large number of life saving drugs; encouraging foreign direct investment and liberalizing it further by putting almost all items/activities on the automatic route and allowing certain percentage of imports of specified items against foreign exchange earnings obtained from provision of health services.

(e) Yes, Sir.

Registered pharmacists in the distribution and sale of drugs

4558. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that pharmacy students in Karnataka have been agitating that the existing system of involvement of registered pharmacists in the distribution and sale of drugs be continued; and

(b) if so, whether Government propose to ensure that medicines are not allowed to be dispensed by persons who have no basic knowledge of drugs in Karnataka?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) There is no proposal to allow dispensing of medicines by persons who do not have required qualification.

Cancer patients

4559. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of patients suffering from advanced stage cancer in the country;

(b) the names of the Government Hospitals and private Hospitals where proactive cancer screening facilities are available;

(c) the number of cancer detection centres run by the Indian Cancer Society across the country; and

(d) the facilities provided by them to the patients?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA) : (a) to (d) Based on the data available through Population Based Cancer Registries functioning under the National Cancer Registry Programme of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) it has been estimated that in the year 2001, about 8.06 lakh persons would have developed cancer in the country.

Adequate facilities for early detection, diagnosis and treatment of cancer are available in the country. Most of the primary, secondary and tertiary level health care facilities in the country have provision for early detection of common cancers like Breast, Uterine Cervix, Oral Cavity etc. The District Cancer Control Programme (DCCP) component of the National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) also focuses on early detection and prevention of cancer in selected districts by providing training and necessary equipment. Comprehensive cancer detection and management facilities in respective regions/States are provided by 20 Regional Cancer Centres (RCCs) established under NCCP. A health education and awareness drive has been undertaken under the Modified District Cancer Control Programme (MDCCP) in 4 States of Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh which covered about 1 million women. 14 Institutions including 12 RCCs have initiated population based Cancer Control Programmes